狂骨の夢 3

きょうこつのゆめ

原作 京極夏彦
作画 志水アキ

怪

狂骨の夢

THE CRAZY BONES DREAM

story: Kyougoku Natsuhiko art: Shimizu Aki
translation & typesetting: sana @ shikiganai scans

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

There are a lot of subtle hints as to what's really going on in this chapter, so I'll try not to give away too much in the notes! I'll just explain the more obscure references.

Page 9: "Moses & Monotheism"

Sigmund Freud's final book, "Moses and Monotheism" is part crackpot psychology, part crackpot alternative history. Freud applied the psychoanalytic techniques he used to unearth "repressed memories" to history and culture in an attempt to reveal the "true history.". He belived that the biblical hero Moses wasn't actually Jewish - he was an Egyptian nobleman who followed the radical monotheistic Egyptian king Akhenaten (King Tut's father). After Akhenaten's death, Moses supposedly lead a small uprising, but he was killed by his own followers. The followers, now filled with guilt, joined up with a Hebrew tribe and introduced the concept of a "savior" who would return from death. Freud, who was born Jewish but suffered a crisis of fate in his later years, hypothesized that modern Jews still suffered from a cultural sense of guilt and were therefore dependent on religion. Of course, if you're familiar with Egyptian history or Jewish history at all, you'll recognize that this is *total bullshit*... So in "Moses & Monotheism," you can sorta see how conspiracy-based cult thinking is able to sway the minds of even educated people like Sigmund Freud.

Page 25: The Godless Month

According to Shinto belief, the gods leave their home shrines every October and assemble at Izumo Shrine, where they discuss the births, deaths and marriages that are planned for the coming year. October is called the "godless month" because most of the gods are "out of the office." However, a handful of gods stay behind to listen to the prayers of the faithful. The most familiar of these gods is Ebisu, the deaf and deformed god of fortune. But there are a handful other gods who stay behind... and nearly all of them are very *old* gods from an early form of the Shinto religion. Their refusal to join the other gods in Izumo every October is almost an act of defiance - they're saying that their loyalty is to the old gods and the families that worship them, not to the new gods and the Imperial throne. The sinister priests in this chapter mention several obscure shrines, all of which are dedicated to the rebellious old gods.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES (CONTINUED)

Page 40: The Lonely Monk

This series makes several references to Saigyo, a well-known poet and Buddhist monk who lived in the 1100s. His poems explore the conflict between his humanity and the Buddhist ideal of renouncing the world. According to legend, Saigyo suffered from terrible loneliness during his travels throughout Japan, so he collected human bones from the graveyards on Mount Koya and used a forbidden ritual involving arsenic, incense and magical herbs to grant them life. The ritual was a success, but the creature he'd made was a soulless, Frankenstein-like monster. Saigyo couldn't bear to kill his wretched creation, so he abandoned it in the forest. Saigyo then returned to the capital, where he consulted with his mentor, Minamoto no Moronaka, a lord who had himself dabbled in occult rituals. Moronaka claimed that he'd successfully used the ritual to restore the dead in mind, body and spirit, and that Saigyo's failure was due to a few simple, easily corrected mistakes. But Saigyo, who was still disturbed by thoughts of the monster he'd made and then abandoned, decided that it would be immoral to attempt the ritual again, so the secret art of ressurection died with him.

Page 71: The Strange Temple

Isama wanders through the grounds of a seemingly abandoned Buddhist temple, but soon realizes that there's something deeply *wrong* with the place. There's no bell tower, no graveyard, and no statues of Buddha or any bodhisattvas (Buddhist saints). If you're not a Buddhist that might not sound so weird, but it's almost like a Christian church where all of the crosses are upside down - if you saw something like that, you'd probably assume that it was being used by some weird Satanic cult, right? So that's why Isama freaks out at the temple. You'll find out the significance of this strange temple in a few chapters, but it's safe to say that you won't see any other temples like *that* in Japan.

Page 83: Homecoming

After Japan's defeat in World War II, hundreds of thousands of Japanese soldiers surrendered to Soviet forces and were sent to POW camps in Siberia. Tens of thousands died in the harsh conditions. Although most prisoners were returned to Japan by 1956, a few remained trapped until the late 1990s - lost in bureaucratic paperwork for over 50 years. Since the Japanese government insisted that no soldiers had been taken captive, in most cases the men's families had no idea whether they were alive or dead. When the men returned to Japan, re-integration was often very difficult. Families had moved on or died in air raids, and the government provided very little support for veterans. The shame of surrender and the trauma of PTSD was so great that many soldiers were like empty husks when they came home. So in 1952 it wouldn't be unusual to see young, dead-eyed men in dirty uniforms wandering around because they had nowhere to go.

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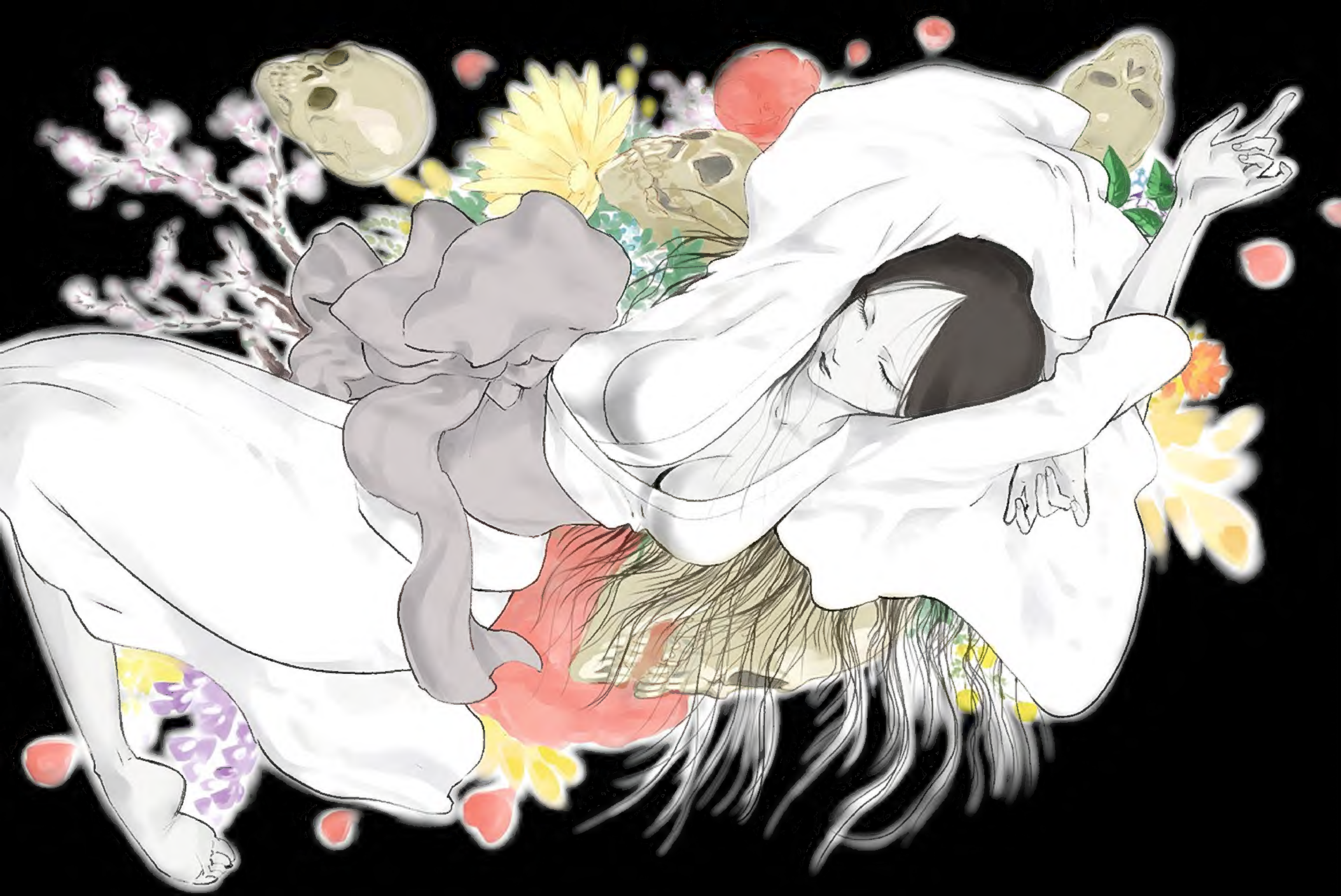

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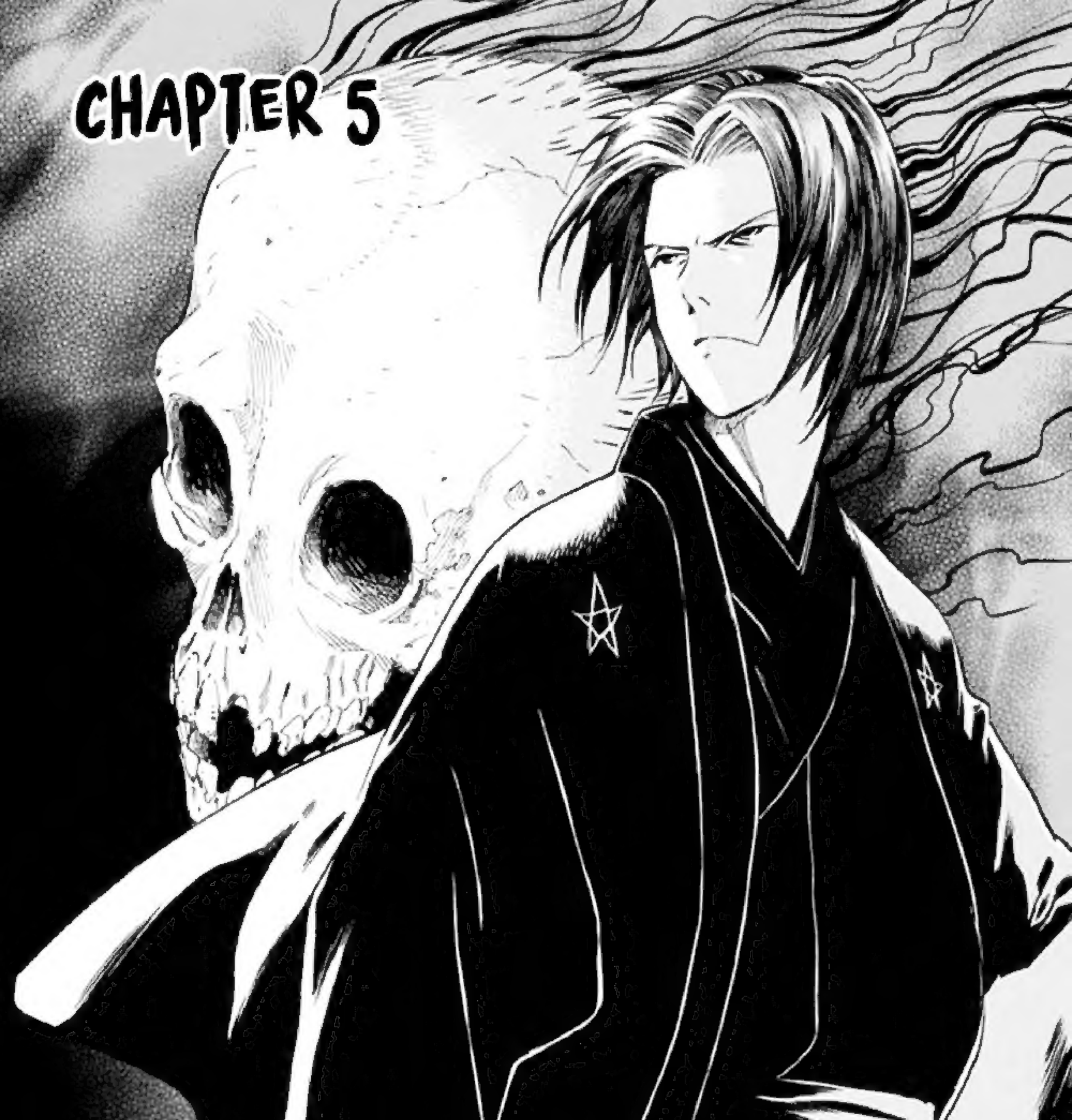


ACTUALLY, I...

I HAVE A CONFESSION TO MAKE.

I WANTED TO ASK YOU SOMETHING...

IN A PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY.

I...

I TOO HAVE A FEAR OF BONES.

HE WANTS COUNSELING?

I'VE ONLY KNOWN HIM FOR A FEW MONTHS, BUT EVEN I CAN TELL THAT SOMETHING IS WRONG...

HUH ...

I WONDER WHAT THIS HAS TO DO WITH BONES?

HERE, HAVE A DRINK.
IT'S RUM.
TAP

CLINK

OKAY ...

I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH ME.

SOME-THING IN ME IS TWISTED.

ANYWAY, DOC...

WHAT IS HE GETTING AT?

SORT OF... WHAT'S WRONG?

ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE PSYCH-OLOGY OF RELIGION?

.....

!

SHOCK

COULD YOU...

UM...

PSYCHO-ANALYZE ME?

FREUD BELIEVED THAT RELIGION WAS A SORT OF "COLLECTIVE OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER" AND THAT PEOPLE SOUGHT GOD BECAUSE THEY WERE TRAPPED IN AN INFANTILE STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT AND SO CRAVED A POWERFUL FATHER FIGURE.

BUT FRANKLY, IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION, CARL JUNG'S WRITINGS ARE MUCH BETTER...

FRELID'S INTERPRETATION FAILED TO CONSIDER THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION.

THAT FREUD GUY THAT YOU HATE WROTE A BOOK ON RELIGION, DIDN'T HE?

"MOSES AND SOME-THING-OR-OTHER."

"MOSES AND MONO-THEISM."

I DIDN'T KNOW YOU'D READ IT, RYOU-SAN.

...HE SAW RIGHT THROUGH ME.

I CAN'T BLAME YOU.

IT'S NOT LIKE I HAVEN'T THOUGHT ABOUT IT MYSELF.

OF COURSE. I'M NOT A PROFESSIONAL RELIGIOUS SCHOLAR.

YOU'RE ALREADY PSYCHO-ANALYZING ME, AREN'T YOU?

YOU'RE FORMING THEORIES ABOUT MY REAL MOTI-VATIONS IN YOUR HEAD, RIGHT?

GASP

BUT HERE, IT'S DIFFER-ENT.

HERE, THE MIND IS AT THE CORE.

KNOW-LEDGE IS LIKE BONES, YOU KNOW?

BONES PROVIDE THE CORE STRUCTURE FOR OUR HANDS AND FEET...

I'M A PASTOR...

PERHAPS I SHOULD BE TALKING ABOUT THE "SOUL" INSTEAD OF THE BRAIN.

BUT YOU UNDERSTAND THAT BRAIN AND SOUL ARE INSEPARABLE.

IF SOME-THING IS WRONG WITH ONE...

THE OTHER IS AFFECTED TOO.

THE BONES OF THE SKULL ARE MERELY A SHELL.

GULP

THEIR ONLY FUNCTION IS TO PROTECT THE CONTENTS OF THE BRAIN.

...YES.

THE EFFECT OF ONE'S BELIEFS ON THE MIND.

I DON'T REALLY KNOW WHERE THIS CONVERSATION IS GOING...

THE EFFECT OF RELIGION ON THE BRAIN?

THAT'S A STRANGE IDEA, ISN'T IT?

SO, WE HAVE THE "PSYCH-OLOGY OF RELIGION."

IT EXPLORES UNIQUE RELIGIOUS EMOTIONAL STATES SUCH AS "AWE" OR "RAPTURE."

IT SEEKS TO EXPLAIN THE SUPER-NATURAL.

RELIGIOUS PSYCHOLOGY ATTEMPTS TO UNDERSTAND THE PSYCHO-LOGICAL ORIGINS OF FAITH AND BELIEF.

I'M INTER-ESTED IN THAT BIT ABOUT MYSTICAL EXPERI-ENCES.

UM...

WELL, ACTUALLY ...

RYOU-SAN, WHY ARE YOU ASKING ME ABOUT ALL OF THIS?

AND OF COURSE IT STUDIES THE EFFECT OF RELIGION ON PERSON-ALITY...

THE STUDY OF MYSTICAL EXPERI-ENCES IS A MAJOR PART OF RELIGIOUS PSYCHOLOGY.

AND YET PEOPLE *FEEL* THAT THESE EXPERIENCES REALLY HAPPENED...

WELL, A "MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE" IS EXACTLY WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE...

AN EXPERIENCE THAT CAN'T POSSIBLY OCCUR IN THE REAL WORLD.

THE PHILOSOPHER RUDOLF OTTO CALLED THESE EXPERIENCES *"NUMINOUS"* -

"A NON-RATIONAL, NON-SENSORY EXPERIENCE OR FEELING WHOSE PRIMARY AND IMMEDIATE OBJECT IS OUTSIDE THE SELF."

!

FOR INSTANCE, A MYSTICAL OR PARANORMAL EXPERIENCE CAN PRODUCE A SPONTANEOUS CONVERSION TO A NEW RELIGION...

BUT IS THIS A GENUINE BELIEF?

...*"NUMI-NOUS,"* HUH?

IT'S THIS INTEREST IN "NUMINOUS" EMOTIONS THAT SEPARATES RELIGIOUS PSYCHOLOGY FROM NORMAL PSYCHOLOGY.

"NUMINOUS" EXPERIENCES PRODUCE CONFLICTING FEELINGS OF FEAR AND OVERWHELMING RAPTURE...

A SENSE OF AWE, IN OTHER WORDS.

GLUG GLUG

...PERSONALLY, I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND RELIGION.

TAP

WELL, THAT'S INTERESTING.

GULP.

SOMETIMES EVEN THEIR CORE BELIEFS CAN WARP BEYOND RECOGNITION.

AND WHEN YOU GET A LARGE GROUP OF BELIEVERS TOGETHER,

THERE ARE SO MANY BELIEF SYSTEMS IN THE WORLD...

HOW CAN ONE OF THEM BE THE "TRUTH?"

WELL, YOU'RE A SCHOLAR.

SCHOLARS NEVER STOP LOOKING FOR THE TRUTH.

I LOST MY FAITH IN FREUD, SO I WENT SEEKING TRUTH ELSEWHERE...

BUT NO BELIEF SYSTEM OR DOGMA OR RELIGIOUS THEORY EVER REALLY HELPED ME.

TCH.

MAYBE I'M JUST SABOTAGING MYSELF.

IT FEELS LIKE I'VE BEEN CURSED BY SIGMUND FREUD.

NO SHIT.

TELL ME SOME-THING I DON'T KNOW.

...YOU KNOW, YOU ARE *WAAAY* TOO OBSESSED WITH THAT FREUD GUY.

sigh

GULP

I GUESS THE TWO OF US...

HAVE A LOT IN COMMON.

...I WAS AROUND 3 OR 4 WHEN I FIRST FELT THAT "SENSE OF AWE."

EVERYBODY IS INFLUENCED BY THEIR CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES TO SOME EXTENT, RIGHT?

HUH?

HIS TONE SUDDENLY CHANGED...

EVER SINCE I WAS A CHILD...

I'VE HAD A FEAR OF CORPSES AND BONES.

IT SOUNDS OVERDRAMATIC TO CALL IT A "MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE"...

BUT THAT'S WHAT IT WAS.

YOUR DREAM AND AKEMI-SAN'S STORY BROUGHT ALL OF OF THOSE OLD MEMORIES FLOODING BACK.

ALRIGHT ...

I GUESS I'LL START AT THE BEGINNING.

...OF COURSE.

I, TOO, HAVE A FEAR OF BONES.

SO I DIDN'T JUST IMAGINE HIM SAYING THAT...

YOU LISTENED TO ME TALK ABOUT MY DREAM, AFTER ALL.

FURU-HATA-KUN...

WILL YOU HEAR ME OUT?

YES, FROM A TOWN CALLED HAKUI ON THE NOTO PENNINSULA.

I'M NOT FROM AROUND HERE - I'M FROM KUCHINOTO.

KUCHI-NOTO?

HUH... SO "KUCHI-NOTO" MUST BE WRITTEN AS "ENTRANCE TO THE NOTO PENNINSULA."

WHENEVER THE TEMPLE BELL RANG, I WOULD RUN TO MY GRAND-MOTHER.

I WAS TERRIFIED OF THE SOUND.

I LIVED NEAR BUZAIIN TEMPLE.

IT'S AN OLD TEMPLE OF THE SOTO ZEN SCHOOL.

DING DONG

DO YOU KNOW WHY TEMPLES HAVE BELLS?

THE BELL OF WIS-DOM?

THAT'S THE BELL OF WISDOM, RYOUICHI.

DON'T BE AFRAID.

LONG AGO, IN THE 1700S ...

A CARPENTER NAMED KICHIBE LEFT HIS WIFE BEHIND TO FIND WORK IN THE CITY.

AFTER ABOUT TWO YEARS, HIS WIFE FOUND OUT THAT HE'D BEEN KEEPING A MISTRESS...

SHE WAS OVERCOME WITH RAGE.

THAT NIGHT, SHE HAD A DREAM.

THIS WAS ON JULY 11TH, 1766, IN THE EARLY MORNING.

SHE DREAMED THAT SHE TORE OPEN KICHIBE'S THROAT WITH HER TEETH.

AND THEN SHE WOKE UP.

SHE WAS FRIGHTENED, SO SHE DECIDED TO GO TO EDO TO CHECK ON HER HUSBAND.

SHE WAS ON HER WAY TO EDO WHEN SHE MET A WOMAN AT ZENKOUJI TEMPLE IN NAGANO.

NOTE Zenkouji Temple in Nagano was considered to be an especially holy place, so people would carry the bones of dead loved ones across vast distances to lay them to rest at Zenkouji.

ACCORDING TO THE MISTRESS, KICHIBE HAD SUDDENLY STARTED CLAWING AT HIS THROAT AND SPITTING BLOOD...

HE DIED ON THE SAME NIGHT THAT THE WIFE HAD HAD HER FRIGHTENING DREAM.

IT TURNED OUT THAT THE WOMAN WAS KICHIBE'S MISTRESS...

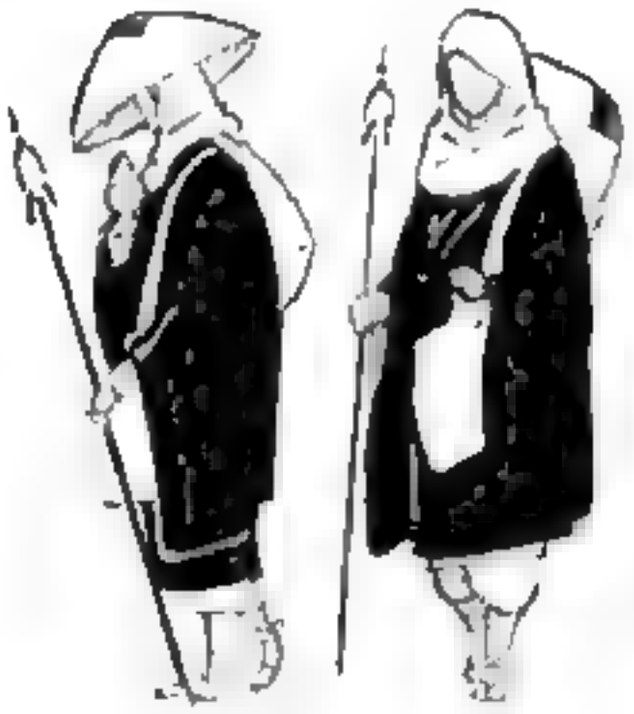
AND SHE CARRIED A BOX FULL OF KICHIBE'S BONES.

THEY TRAVELED TO EDO TO SEE THE GREAT BELL AT THE TEMPLE IN REIGANJIMA, WHICH HAD JUST BEEN COMPLETED.

ACTUALLY, THAT BELL STILL EXISTS TODAY - IT'S ONE OF THE GREAT TREASURES OF ZEN BUDDHISM.

WHEN THE WIFE HEARD THE OTHER WOMAN'S STORY, HER JEALOUSY INSTANTLY TURNED TO GRIEF.

THE WOMEN ASKED THE PRIEST TO PERFORM A MEMORIAL SERVICE, AND THEY THEY DECIDED TO BECOME BUDDHIST NUNS.



"LISTEN AND BE AFRAID, FOR THAT IS THE BELL OF WISDOM."
THERE'S EVEN AN OLD SONG ABOUT IT.
"IT TOLLS FOR THOSE WHO WERE LED ASTRAY BY LOVE. NOW, THEIR SAD CRIES ECHO DAY AND NIGHT."

NO, THAT'S NOT IT.

WHATEVER, IT DOESN'T MATTER.

RYOU-SAN, WHERE IS THIS STORY GOING?

SO YOU THINK HE JUST COINCI-DENTALLY DIED ON THE SAME NIGHT THAT SHE DREAMED OF KILLING HIM?

BUT IT WASN'T REALLY HER FAULT, WAS IT?

WHEN I WAS YOUNG, I THOUGHT THAT THE WIFE WAS WRONG FOR GIVING IN TO HER JEALOUSY AND KILLING HER HUSBAND.

THAT'S A RATHER MORBID STORY TO TELL A CHILD, ISN'T IT?

I SEE...

SHE DEFINITELY KILLED HIM.

BUT WHEN I WAS A CHILD, I DIDN'T HAVE THE EMOTIONAL MATURITY TO REALLY UNDERSTAND THE STORY.

EVEN NOW, IT'S HARD TO UNDERSTAND HER MOTIVATIONS.

WHY WOULDN'T SHE JUST KILL THE MISTRESS SO HER HUSBAND WOULD COME BACK TO HER?

I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY SHE WOULD FEEL DRIVEN TO KILL HER HUSBAND SO BRUTALLY, AND I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY SHE WOULD WANT TO BECOME A NUN AFTER THAT.

DON'T YOU THINK SO TOO?

HER HUSBAND WAS A CHEATING SCUMBAG, BUT SHE STILL LOVED HIM.

WHEN SHE FOUND OUT THAT HE'D DIED, SHE THREW HERSELF AT THE MERCY OF THE PRIEST.

YEAH, BUT...

BUT NOW I SEE THAT THE WIFE IS THE VICTIM, NOT THE VILLAIN.

SHE KILLED HER HUSBAND... HOW IS SHE THE VICTIM?

I SEE...

OH, I GET IT...

YEAH, THAT'S A TYPICAL BUDDHIST STORY, ISN'T IT?

WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND THE WOMAN'S FEELINGS.

AND I WAS STILL AFRAID OF BUDDHIST TEMPLES.

THE CHEATING HUSBAND WOULD HAVE BEEN DAMNED FOR HIS SINS, BUT THE TWO WOMENS' SACRIFICE WAS ENOUGH TO PURIFY HIS SOUL, TOO.

ON THE SURFACE, IT SOUNDS LIKE ONE OF THOSE TRITE BUDDHIST MORAL STORIES.

THE WIFE HAD COMMITTED THE SIN OF JEALOUSY, AND THE MISTRESS HAD COMMITTED THE SIN OF ADULTERY.

SO THEY BOTH BEGGED THE PRIEST FOR SALVATION, AND THEIR SOULS WERE SAVED.

HAHA

...NO.

...SO WHY DID YOU BRING ME DOWN HERE?

ARE WE JUST GOING TO SIT AROUND AND TELL GHOST STORIES?

WHEN MY GRANDMOTHER TOLD ME ABOUT THE BONES IN THE BOX...

THAT STUCK IN MY MIND.

I COULDN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT IT.

SO IS THAT WHY HE'S AFRAID OF BONES?

AH...

AND NATURALLY, I WAS AFRAID OF THE TEMPLE ITSELF...

BECAUSE IT WAS A PLACE OF DEATH...

EVERY TIME I HEARD THE TEMPLE BELL, I THOUGHT OF THAT MAN'S BONES, AND I BEGAN TO TREMBLE.

AFTER THAT, I WAS AFRAID EVERY TIME I HAD TO OPEN A CONTAINER.

WHEN AKEMI-SAN WAS TELLING US HER STORY, RYOU-SAN SEEMED ESPECIALLY BOTHERED BY THE PART ABOUT THE BLOOD-SOAKED PRIEST.

I WONDER WHY...

I GUESS HEARING A SCARY STORY LIKE THAT AT SUCH A YOUNG AGE MUST HAVE REALLY AFFECTED HIS DEVELOPMENT.

BUT IT'S NORMAL FOR PEOPLE TO BE AFRAID OF DEATH, RIGHT?

.....

ANYWAY, IT FEELS A BIT SACRELIGIOUS TO DO IT IN A CHURCH.

I DON'T REALLY KNOW THAT MUCH ABOUT BUDDHISM OR BUDDHIST TEMPLES, SO I SHOULDN'T TALK.

HAHA... SORRY.

IS HE EVER GOING TO GET TO THE POINT?

IN A WAY, IT WAS MY RELIGIOUS AWAKENING

YOU COULD SAY THAT I HAD ONE OF THOSE "NUMINOUS" EXPERI-ENCES.

IN A WAY...

BUT I REALLY AM AFRAID OF BONES...

I GUESS...

I WAS TEN YEARS OLD...

NOTE Japanese funeral caskets usually have a little window to view the face of the deceased, instead of opening the whole casket like in a Western-style funeral.

They say that Kagitori Myoujin watches over his shrine even when all the other gods go to Izumo, so he'll definitely protect me...

Shinto shrines don't have bells or graves, so I'll be safe there...

If I go that way, I can hide at Kagitori Myoujin Shrine...

GASP

I made it... I'm safe...

Gh-ghosts!?
But ghosts can't enter a shrine...
What if they're gods...!?
GULP
What if...

They're gods!

They must be gods!!

WHAT ABOUT HIKOGAMI SHRINE?

THERE ARE TWO SMALLER SHRINES NEARBY, TOO.

THAT'S TRUE, BUT LATELY ZENKOUJI HAS BEEN ATTRACTING MORE AND MORE BUDDHISTS...

IT'S TOO BUSY.

WE CAN'T GO THERE.

LET'S TRY SOME-PLACE ELSE.

SHOULD WE TRY ZENKOUJI?

IT'S A BUDDHIST TEMPLE, BUT I HEARD THERE'S A SHINTO SHRINE ON THE GROUNDS...

IT'S NO USE.

THIS ISN'T THE RIGHT PLACE.

Zenkouji?

That's the temple from Grandmother's story...

That's where the two women brought the husband's bones!

BUT MAYBE WE SHOULD STILL TRY ZENKOUJI ...

MIKOGAMI AND FUTA-HASHITA SHRINES.

HM, THAT'S A POSSI-BILITY...

WHAT ABOUT SUWA SHRINE?

IT'S THE LOGICAL PLACE TO LOOK.

WE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO PERFORM THE SUMMONING IF WE HAVE TO RUN ALL OVER THE WHOLE DAMNED COUNTRY.

WHAT ABOUT SHIMONO-GOU?

THERE'S IKUSHIMA-TARUJIMA SHRINE... MAYBE THAT WOULD WORK.

NO, WE CAN'T JUST GO DIGGING AROUND THERE.

AND BESIDES, IT'S NOT A SHRINE TO THE RIGHT GOD.

WE CAN'T GO THERE.

BUT THE LEG BONES WERE FOUND AT HIRAKATA SHRINE IN ECHIGO!

I THINK WE SHOULD START THERE.

I THINK WE NEED TO GO BACK TO IZUMO AND RETRACE OUR STEPS.

THE ARM BONES WERE FOUND IN IZUMO, AFTER ALL.

WE NEED TO GO BACK.

!!

BONES !?

...NOW WHAT DO WE HAVE HERE?

PISS

They're not gods!

They're all dirty...

I AGREE.
WE CAN'T AFFORD TO TAKE CHANCES.
LET'S KILL HIM.
WE'LL SHOW HIM TO FEAR THE GODS.
WE CAN'T RISK BEING SEEN.
HM... I DON'T KNOW.
SOMEBODY MIGHT COME LOOKING FOR HIM.
... SHOULD WE KILL HIM?
SO WHAT SHOULD WE DO, THEN?
THIS IS A SHRINE!
WE DON'T WANT TO CORRUPT THIS PLACE WITH DEATH.
WAIT, WAIT.

LOOK AT THIS.

BOY...

...BONES...

YOU'D BETTER PAY YOUR RESPECTS TO THESE BONES, KID.

THEY JUST SAVED YOUR LIFE.

Bones...
Bones...
Bones...
Bones...

IF YOU SAY EVEN ONE WORD ABOUT THIS TO ANYONE ELSE, THEN YOU, YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR FRIENDS WILL ALL BE DAMNED.

LISTEN, BOY.

YOU MUST NEVER, EVER TELL ANYONE ABOUT WHAT YOU'VE SEEN HERE.

BONES...

BONES...

DO YOU UNDER-STAND?

THE NEXT DAY, IT WAS DISCOVERED THAT A THIEF HAD BEEN DIGGING FOR SOMETHING ON THE GROUNDS OF THE KAGITORI MYOUJIN SHRINE, AND EVERYBODY FORGOT ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO ME.

I FORGOT TOO...

UNTIL NOW.

THE MEN DRESSED LIKE SHINTO PRIESTS LEFT AFTER THAT, AND SOON MY RELATIVES CAME LOOKING FOR ME.

I CAN STILL REMEMBER EVERY WORD THEY SAID...

BUT I'VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO TRULY FORGET THAT NIGHT.

SO YOU NEVER TOLD ANY-ONE?

I NEVER TOLD ANYONE.

I THOUGHT I'D DIE IF I TOLD, AFTER ALL.

BUT DID IT REALLY HAPPEN, OR WAS HE JUST IMAGINING IT?

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO HIM LEFT PSYCHO-LOGICAL SCARS...

SO WHO WERE THOSE MEN, AND WHAT WERE THEY DOING?

I'M NOT SURE, BUT I HAVE A FEW GUESSES.

OH REALLY?

WELL ...

I THINK ...

I THINK THEY WERE LOOKING FOR SOMETHING.

SOMETHING THAT THEY DIDN'T FIND AT THAT SHRINE.

LOOKING FOR SOME-THING?

YEAH... AFTER ALL, THE SKELETON IN THAT BOX WASN'T COMPLETE.

IT WASN'T COMPLETE...?

SO YOU THINK THEY WERE LOOKING FOR THE REST OF THAT PERSON'S BONES?

THE SKELETON IN THE BOX WAS MISSING ITS HEAD.

I THINK THAT PERSON'S BONES MUST HAVE BEEN BURIED IN SEVERAL PLACES, AND THEY WERE TRYING TO FIND THEM ALL.

HOW DO YOU EVEN KNOW THAT THEY ALL BELONGED TO ONE PERSON?

WHY WOULD A PERSON'S BONES BE BURIED IN DIFFERENT PLACES?

YEAH, THAT'S PRETTY CRAZY.

...CRAZY STORY, HUH?

IT'S NOT DONE WITHOUT A REASON...

AND IT TURNS OUT THAT THERE'S USUALLY A SPECIFIC MEANING WHEN BONES ARE DISPERSED LIKE THAT.

WELL ...

ACTUALLY, I DID SOME RESEARCH.

INDEED.

.....

SO THERE WAS A REASON ...?

On an autumn evening, a bird rises from the marsh.

Even to one who is free from passion, such loneliness can be unbearable.

IN ONE OF THE STORIES, A MONK CALLED SAIGYOU WAS DESPERATE WITH LONELINESS.

SO, HE COLLECTED BONES FROM THE GRAVEYARDS ON MOUNT KOUYA, AND TRIED TO USE MAGIC TO CREATE A COMPANION.

NOTE The monk Saigyou was a famous poet who lived in the 1100s. His works explore Buddhist themes.

THERE'S AN OLD COLLECTION OF BUDDHIST STORIES CALLED THE "SENJUU-SHOU."

NOTE In the story, Saigyo manages to animate the skeleton, but it's a soulless monster and he's forced to abandon it.

I WAS 16 WHEN I REALIZED WHAT IT ALL MEANT.

AND... IT THRILLED ME.

RESUR-RECTION!?

YOU MEAN... BRINGING THE DEAD BACK TO LIFE!?

SO I THINK THOSE BONES WERE SCATTERED TO PREVENT SOMEONE FROM COMING BACK TO LIFE...

AND THOSE PRIESTS WERE COLLECTING THEM TO PERFORM SOME KIND OF RESURRECTION RITUAL.

ACCORDING TO SAIGYOU'S STORY, THE BONES DON'T EVEN HAVE TO ALL BE FROM THE SAME PERSON.

HE COLLECTED BONES FROM GRAVEYARDS ALL OVER THE MOUNTAIN.

RYOU-SAN, YOU'RE FREAKING ME OUT...

THIS SOUNDS WEIRDLY SIMILAR TO AKEMI'S STORY...

IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE AT ALL!

GRR.

HAHA, IT'S A BIT BLASPHEMOUS, ISN'T IT?

BUT IT'S THE ONLY EXPLANATION THAT MAKES SENSE...

LEAN

RYOU-SAN, YOU...

YOU SAW SOMETHING FRIGHTENING AND IT AFFECTED YOU DEEPLY, SO YOU TRIED TO FIGURE OUT A LOGICAL EXPLANATION.

BUT INSTEAD OF USING LOGIC, YOU'VE COME UP WITH SOMETHING COMPLETELY INSANE!

I WAS AFRAID OF PRIESTS AND TEMPLES AND DEATH.

AFTER WHAT HAPPENED, I COULDN'T GO BACK TO BUDDHISM OR SHINTO.

YOU'RE RIGHT.

AND I REALLY DID TRY TO STOP THINKING ABOUT IT.

.....

I WAS EX-COMMUNI-CATED FROM THE CHURCH.

BUT I WAS TOO UN-ORTHODOX TO BE A PASTOR.

AND YET, I CRAVED SOMETHING TO BELIEVE IN...

MY CONVERSION TO CHRISTIANITY WASN'T DUE TO A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING - IT WAS SIMPLY A PROCESS OF ELIMINATION.

I BECAME A PROTESTANT MINISTER.

YEAH.

IT'S HARD TO PREACH PEACE WHEN THE WORLD IS AT WAR AND PEOPLE ARE DYING LEFT AND RIGHT.

AND THEN THE CHURCH FELL UNDER GOVERNMENT CONTROL, SO THEY TOLD ME WHAT TO SAY...

MAYBE I JUST PICKED A REALLY BAD TIME TO BECOME A PASTOR.

IT WAS DURING THE WAR, RIGHT?

BUT RYOU-SAN, I THOUGHT YOU FOUGHT IN THE WAR?

WELL, I TRIED.

IF I'D LISTENED TO MY CONSCIENCE AND KEPT PREACHING AGAINST WAR, I WOULD HAVE BEEN DRAFTED AND SENT STRAIGHT TO THE FRONT LINES.

SO I SURVIVED BY BEING A HYPOCRITE.

THERE WAS NOTHING ELSE I COULD DO.

WHAT HAP-PENED?

.....

SO I WAS DISCHARGED FROM THE ARMY AND FROM THE CHURCH!

HA HA HA

I STILL HAVE THE SCAR FROM IT.

I ENLISTED...

BUT I WAS ACCIDENTALLY SHOT IN THE LEG DURING A TRAINING EXERCISE.

THERE'S MORE TO THAT STORY ABOUT THE SHINTO PRIESTS.

ACTUALLY ...

...HUH!?

CREAK

SO ON MY WAY BACK HOME, I PASSED BY THE MANDARADOU TOMBS IN NAGOE.

IT WAS IN JANUARY OF 1945...

I HAD SOME BUSINESS IN KAMA-KURA,

MANDARADOU IS ESSENTIALLY A VERTICAL GRAVEYARD -

TOMBS WERE CUT RIGHT INTO THE ROCKY HILLS.

!

NOTE

During the 13th and 14th centuries, thousands of small samurai tombs were carved into the rocky hills around Kamakura.

Although the tombs were once closed off by wooden doors, most were looted over the centuries and reused for storage or for more recent burials.

The Mandara-dou Tombs are located n ear Nagoe, a narrow pass through steep hills that links Kamakura to Zushi.

UGH...

UGH...

He must have collapsed ...

HEY, ARE YOU ALRIGHT?

At the very least, I can carry his box...

That's stupid.

I haven't even lived here for that long.

I'd better help him get home...

...Huh?

Somehow, he seems familiar...

GASP

WHAT!?

GRAB

It's the man from back then...!!

LET'S KILL HIM.

That's the same box!

It must be full of bones!

WHERE...

IS THE HEAD?

I...

I MUST FIND IT...

AS SOON AS THEY FOUND THE HEAD, WHATEVER THEY WERE TRYING TO CREATE WOULD BE COMPLETE...

THE IMPRES-SION I GOT...

WAS THAT THOSE MEN WERE LOOKING FOR THE HEAD.

.....

WHAT ABOUT THE HEAD?

FINISH YOUR THOUGHT, DAMN IT!

IT'S BEEN 20 YEARS...

WHAT IF THEY'RE STILL LOOKING FOR IT?

RYOU-SAN!

RYOU-SAN?

BUT...

WHAT IF THE HEAD IS...

.....

WHAT CAN I DO?

I'M JUST A PASTOR...

IF ALL THE BONES ARE ASSEMBLED...

DOES THAT MEAN THE PERSON CAN BE RESURRECTED?

IS THAT EVEN *POSSIBLE?*

HOW FAR WOULD THEY GO?

NO WAY.

BUT MAYBE THOSE MEN BELIEVED THAT IT WAS POSSIBLE...

BUT SOME-THING ABOUT HIS STORY STILL DOESN'T ADD UP...

YOU THINK TOO MUCH, YOU KNOW?

...SORRY, RYOU-SAN.

IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T TRUST YOU, BUT...

THEY MUST HAVE BEEN RELIGIOUS FANATICS...

I CAN'T BLAME RYOU-SAN FOR BEING TERRIFIED.

IT MUST HAVE FELT LIKE HE WAS WITNESSING SOMETHING SUPERNATURAL...

AND THAT EXPERIENCE DROVE HIM TO SEEK SOLACE IN FAITH.

I WANTED TO ASK YOU SOME-THING...

IN A PROFES-SIONAL CAPACITY.

FOR INSTANCE, WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT MAN?

I HAVE A LOT OF QUEST-IONS.

WHY WOULD RYOU-SAN COME TO ME FOR PSYCHO-LOGICAL HELP?

IT'S NOT LIKE... Oo

I COULD ACTUALLY HELP HIM.

I THINK I DRANK TOO MUCH RUM...

I FEEL SICK...

DAMN IT.

UGH ...

BLERGH

IF I REALLY BELIEVED THAT THE CROSS COULD TAKE AWAY ALL OF MY SINS, I'D THROW MYSELF ON THE GROUND AND BEG FOR FORGIVE-NESS...

CREAK

.....

HEY...

ARE YOU THE PRIEST HERE?

AN EMPLO-YEE?

IT'S AWFUL EARLY FOR YOUR BOSS TO BE ASLEEP, ISN'T IT?

SORRY, HE'S ASLEEP.

I'M JUST AN EMPLOYEE.

...WHO ARE THEY?

POLICE?

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

...HE'S A PASTOR, NOT A PRIEST... THERE'S A DIFFERENCE...

WE'RE THE POLICE.

WE'D LIKE TO TALK TO THE PRIEST.

WHAT!?

CALM DOWN, TABUCHI-KUN.

YOU SAY YOU'RE COPS, BUT YOU SOUND LIKE A BUNCH OF THUGS.

TCH

THAT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.

TAKE US TO THE PRIEST.

PULL

BUT INSPECTOR ...

WE HAVE TO MAINTAIN AN ATTITUDE OF PROFES-SIONALISM.

AND THESE TWO ARE DETECTIVES FROM THE HAYAMA PRECINT...

TABUCHI-KUN AND FUNA-BASHI-KUN.

NO, IT'S FUNAHASHI, ISN'T IT?

I'M INSPECTOR ISHII OF THE NATIONAL POLICE KANAGAWA BUREAU.

FORGIVE ME.

FURUHATA HIROMU.

I DO ODD JOBS AROUND THE CHURCH.

WHAT COULD THE NATIONAL POLICE POSSIBLY WANT FROM RYOU-SAN...?

WE'RE INVESTIGATING A CERTAIN INCIDENT, AND WE WANTED TO SPEAK TO THE PASTOR HERE.

HIS NAME IS SHIRAOKA RYOUICHI-SAN, RIGHT?

PARDON ME, BUT WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

IS HE SICK?

HE'S DRUNK.

HE PASSED OUT.

WHERE IS SHIRAOKA-SAN?

I TOLD YOU, HE'S ASLEEP.

YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO WAKE HIM UP, SO YOU MIGHT AS WELL LEAVE.

HEY ...!!

YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PASTOR AND A PRIEST, SO WHAT GIVES YOU THE RIGHT TO JUDGE!?

YOU'RE A COP, SO YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT NOBODY IS PERFECT.

EVEN MEN OF GOD ARE ONLY HUMAN, SO SOMETIMES THEY HAVE A FEW TOO MANY DRINKS!

YOU HEAR THAT, FUNAHASHI?

THE PRIEST IS PASSED OUT DRUNK AND IT AIN'T EVEN NOON YET!

SNORT

SHOUT

SHUT UP!

WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?!

DON'T BE CHILDISH.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE CASE?

TABUCHI-KUN!

SO THAT'S HIS EXCUSE - HE WAS *DRUNK!?*

THIS IS A CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION, YOU KNOW...

BUT INSPECTOR, HE'S PISSING ME OFF...

REMEMBER, WE'RE MAINTAINING A PROFES-SIONAL ATTITUDE!

...NO.

I JUST DON'T LIKE GUYS WHO PUSH OTHER PEOPLE AROUND...

THEY'RE LIKE THOSE "ELECTS" THAT RYOU-SAN WAS TALKING ABOUT.

THE ONES WHO BELIEVED THAT THEY WERE GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE WHO COULD DO NO WRONG.

MAYBE I JUST HAVE AN INFERIORITY COMPLEX...

I'M GETTING TO THAT.

IF WE CAN'T TALK TO THE PASTOR RIGHT NOW, MAYBE HE CAN GIVE US SOME INFORMATION INSTEAD.

WILL YOU COOPERATE WITH US, FURUHATA-SAN?

TCH

LIAR!
EVERYBODY'S HEARD OF THAT CASE!
TABUCHI-KUN!!
HAVE YOU HEARD OF IT?
WE'RE ACTUALLY INVESTIGATING THE ZUSHI BAY SEVERED HEAD CASE.
...I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
ARE YOU SURE YOU HAVEN'T HEARD OF IT?
IT'S ALRIGHT, FURU-HATA-SAN.
SOME PEOPLE ARE CALLING IT THE "GOLDEN SKULL" CASE.
I DON'T READ THE NEWSPAPER, SO I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON.
WHY WOULD I LIE ABOUT THAT?
IS NOT READING THE NEWSPAPER A CRIME NOW?

I SEE.

WELL, TO MAKE A LONG STORY SHORT, LATELY THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL REPORTS OF SEVERED HEADS FOUND IN ZUSHI BAY.

WE'RE TRYING TO DETERMINE WHETHER THIS IS A MURDER OR MERELY A CASE OF CORPSE DUMPING.

GOLDEN SKULL!?

WHAT? A GOLDEN SKULL? I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THAT.

NOTE In Japan, a suspicious dead body is treated as an "abadoned corpse" case unti. there s strong evidence of foul play. It helps keep the reported crime rate artificially low.

SEVERED HEADS!?

RYOU-SAN IS A MURDER SUSPECT!?

SO WE'RE GOING TO NEED TO ASK HIM SOME QUEST-IONS...

WE'VE RECIEVED REPORTS FROM MULTIPLE WITNESSES WHO SAY THAT THEY SAW THE PASTOR ACTING SUSPICIOUSLY NEAR THE SHORE OF THE BAY.

THAT WAS MONTHS AGO...

BUT NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, RYOU-SAN WAS ACTING KIND OF WEIRD AROUND THAT TIME...

CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT SHIRAOKA-SAN'S WHEREABOUTS ON SEPT-EMBER 22ND?

AND ON THE 24TH?

WHAT?

GLARE

WHAT IF HE'S HIDING SOMETHING, INSPECTOR ISHII?

LET'S INTERROGATE HIM!

WELL? DO YOU KNOW ANY-THING?

GIVE HIM A MOMENT TO THINK ABOUT IT.

IT WOULD BE ODD IF HE ANSWERED TOO QUICKLY, WOULDN'T IT?

TABUCHI-KUN, GET A HOLD OF YOURSELF!

DAMN IT, HOW IS THIS A "PROFES-SIONAL ATTITUDE!?"

...ALRIGHT, THEN.

HE'S NOT UNDER ARREST, AFTER ALL.

WE JUST WANT TO ASK SOME QUESTIONS.

I GET IT, OKAY?

I'LL TELL THE PASTOR TO GO TO THE POLICE STATION TOMORROW.

TCH, WHAT KIND OF POLICE INSPECTOR IS HE?

HIS OWN SUBORD-INATES DON'T RESPECT HIM.

ANYWAY...

WHY DOES EVERYTHING KEEP COMING BACK TO BONES?

WHAT'S THIS "GOLDEN SKULL" CASE ABOUT?

RYOU-
SAN
...?

I guess I'll stay here tonight...

PEACH GARDEN HOTEL

CHEAP RATES FOR TRAVELERS

120 YEN/ NIGHT

TURN BACK NOW!

RECEPTION

PEEK

THE ROOMS HAVE LOCKS, BUT WE DON'T LOCK THE FRONT DOOR...

SO IF YOU LEAVE YOUR SHOES AT THE ENTRANCE THEY MIGHT GET STOLEN.

YOU SHOULD TAKE THEM TO YOUR ROOM WITH YOU.

I'M HEADED HOME, BUT THERE'S A MAID WHO WORKS THE NIGHT SHIFT.

IF YOU NEED ANYTHING, JUST ASK HER.

YOU'LL HAVE TO PAY IN ADVANCE.

WE DON'T SERVE MEALS, BUT THERE'S A KITCHEN SO YOU CAN COOK FOR YOURSELF.

YOU CAN COME AND GO AS YOU PLEASE, BUT THE BATH CLOSES AT 9 O'CLOCK.

WE'RE PRETTY EMPTY TONIGHT, SO YOU WON'T HAVE TROUBLE GETTING IN.

KNOCK KNOCK

YES?

.....

HUH?

OH... JUST ONE NIGHT.

HOW MANY NIGHTS?

THAT'LL BE 120 YEN.

ARE YOU THE MAID?

SURE ...

HEY MISTER, DO YOU WANT SOME TEA?

GOLDEN SKULL?

OOH, YOU HAVEN'T HEARD!?

BECAUSE OF THAT *GOLDEN SKULL*, YOU KNOW?

WOW, THAT'S TOO BAD! EVERYBODY'S AFRAID TO GO FISHING THESE DAYS.

DO YOU COME HERE OFTEN?

OOH, SO YOU CAME TO ZUSHI TO DO SOME FISHING?

YEAH ...

HE SAID IT LOOKED LIKE IT WAS GRINNING... SCARY, HUH?

WELL, BACK IN SEPTEMBER, A FISHERMAN SAW A SKULL FLOATING IN THE BAY...

BUT IT WAS ALL *SHINY!*

SO NOW THEY'RE CALLING IT THE *"SEVERED HEAD CASE."*

A FEW DAYS LATER, THERE WAS ANOTHER SKULL, BUT THAT ONE WASN'T SHINY...

AND THEN THERE WAS A SEVERED HEAD WITH HAIR AND EVERYTHING!

IT'S A MURDER INVESTI-GATION?

OF COURSE!

IF THERE ARE HEADS, THEN THERE MUST BE BODIES SOMEWHERE, RIGHT?

NO WAY, IT'S THE TRUTH!

SOUNDS LIKE A RUMOR.

Sip

LOOK AT THIS!

"TWO DAYS AGO, ON DECEMBER 1ST, ANOTHER HEAD WAS FOUND...

POLICE ARE CURRENTLY LOOKING FOR THE BODY..."

SEE, EVEN THE POLICE ARE INVOLVED!

HUH.

SO IT'S TRUE!

I GUESS.

THE POLICE ARE LOOKING FOR A SUSPECT, SO MAKE SURE YOU DON'T DO ANYTHING SUSPICIOUS!

TAKE CARE!

MM.

WELL, I'D BETTER GET BACK TO WORK.

OH, RIGHT!

I guess I won't be doing much fishing...

What do I do now?

Oh, it's raining...

...OKAY.

No, that doesn't make sense...

If his head was lost in the Tonegawa River, there's no way it was carried all the way to Zushi...

What if one of those severed heads belonged to Akemi-san's husband?

Maybe that's why she does a memorial ritual on the beach every month...

I wonder...

She was totally coming on to me, but I couldn't take advantage of her...

I'm not that kind of man.

.....

ISAMA-SAN...

YOU REMIND ME OF MY HUSBAND ...

But still...

It's been exactly two months since I last saw her...

I wonder if she'll go down to the beach again tonight.

After that, I went home...

She didn't try flirting with me again.

Is that a temple?

OH, MISTER, ARE YOU GOING OUT FOR DINNER?

SORRY, WE DON'T HAVE MUCH HERE... BUT YOU CAN SHARE MINE!

YEAH, I THOUGHT I'D TAKE A WALK.

A TEMPLE?

BY THE WAY, IS THERE A TEMPLE NEARBY?

OH, THANKS.

OH...

I am kind of hungry...

HERE, TRY THESE!

SOMETIMES YOU CAN HEAR SOMEONE CHANTING BUDDHIST SCRIPTURES, LIKE THEY'RE DOING A FUNERAL SERVICE...

IT'S KIND OF CREEPY!

HM... WELL, THERE'S A TEMPLE NEARBY, BUT IT'S NOT FAMOUS OR ANYTHING.

I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER SEEN ANYBODY WORSHIP THERE.

YOU PROBABLY SHOULDN'T GO INSIDE.

OH?

BUT I STAYED WITH MY PARENTS DURING THE WAR.

SINCE I WAS 16...

HAVE YOU LIVED HERE FOR LONG, MISS?

I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT SECT IT IS...

I'M ACTUALLY 30!!

UWAAHH, YOU FLATTERER!

UH...

UM... 25?

HOW OLD DO YOU THINK I AM?

OH NO, THAT MAKES ME SOUND *OLD*, DOESN'T IT!?

A temple that doesn't have any worshippers and that doesn't do funeral services?

How do they make enough money to stay in business?

THAT'S WEIRD, ISN'T IT?

HM... NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, THERE PROBABLY HASN'T BEEN A FUNERAL AT THAT TEMPLE FOR AT LEAST 15 YEARS.

UM, KINE-SAN, COULD I BORROW AN UMBRELLA?

OF COURSE !!

CHEW CHEW SWALLOW

I'M KINE!

UM, MISS...

GULP

GULP

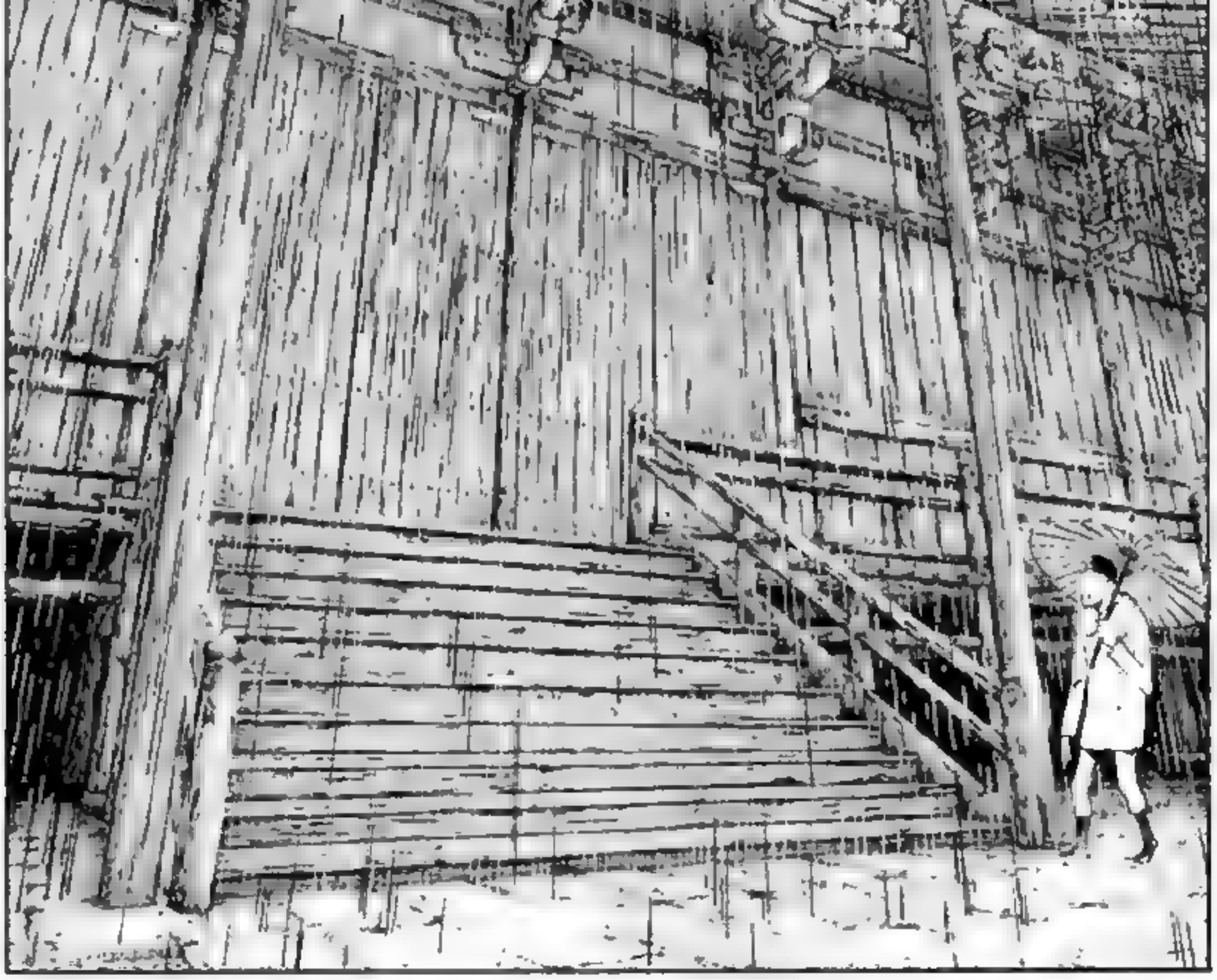
I don't want to get lost...

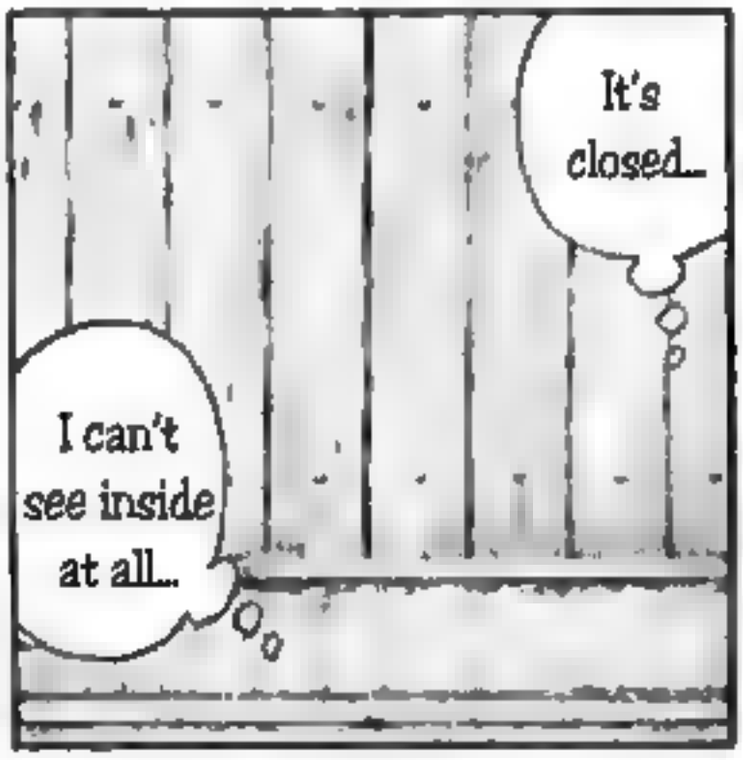
The temple was behind the hotel, right?

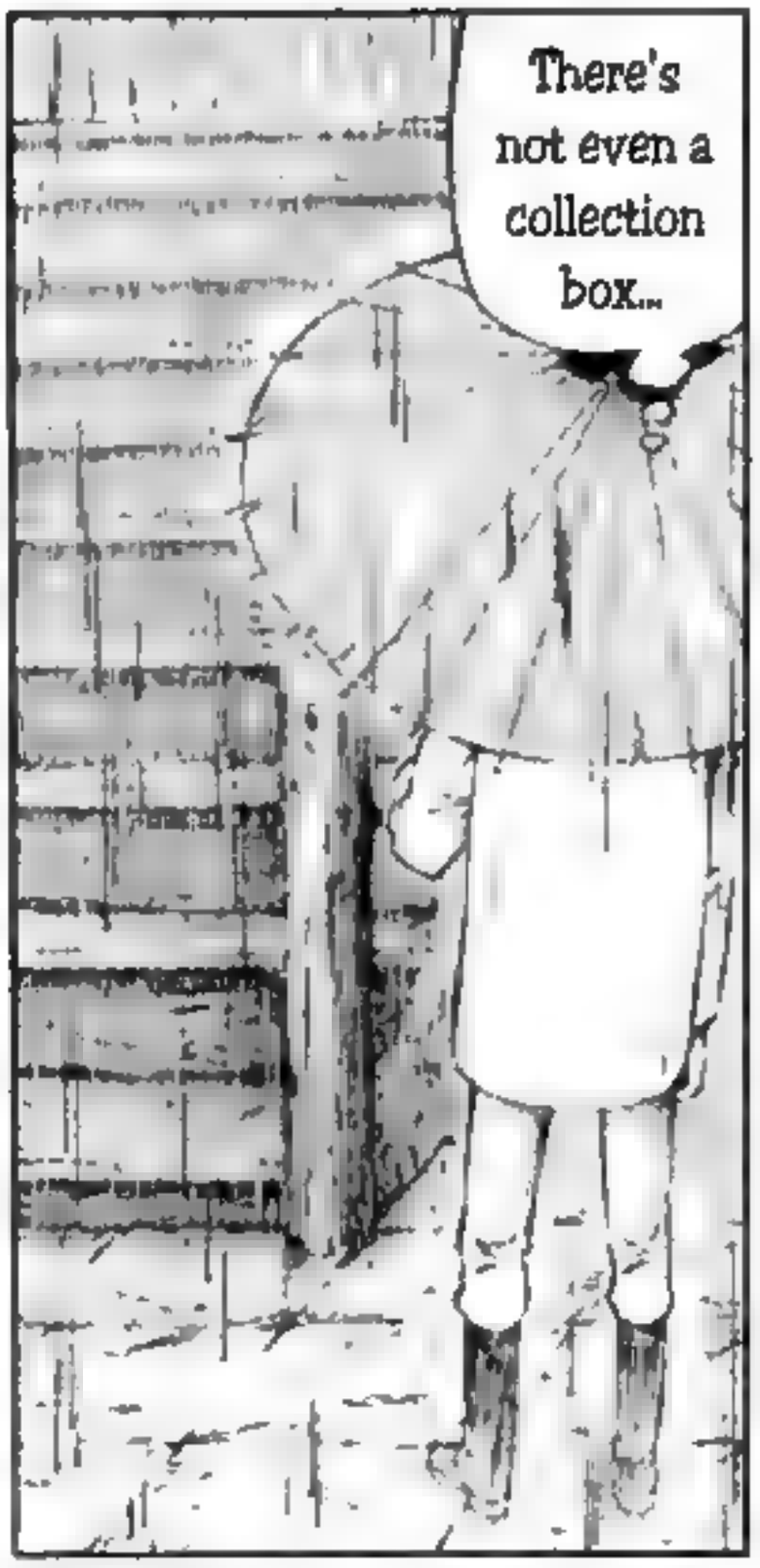
Hm...

NOTE The temple is dedicated to Monju (Manjushri), the bodhisattva of transcendent wisdom.

Sign: "Shoubouin Monju Temple"

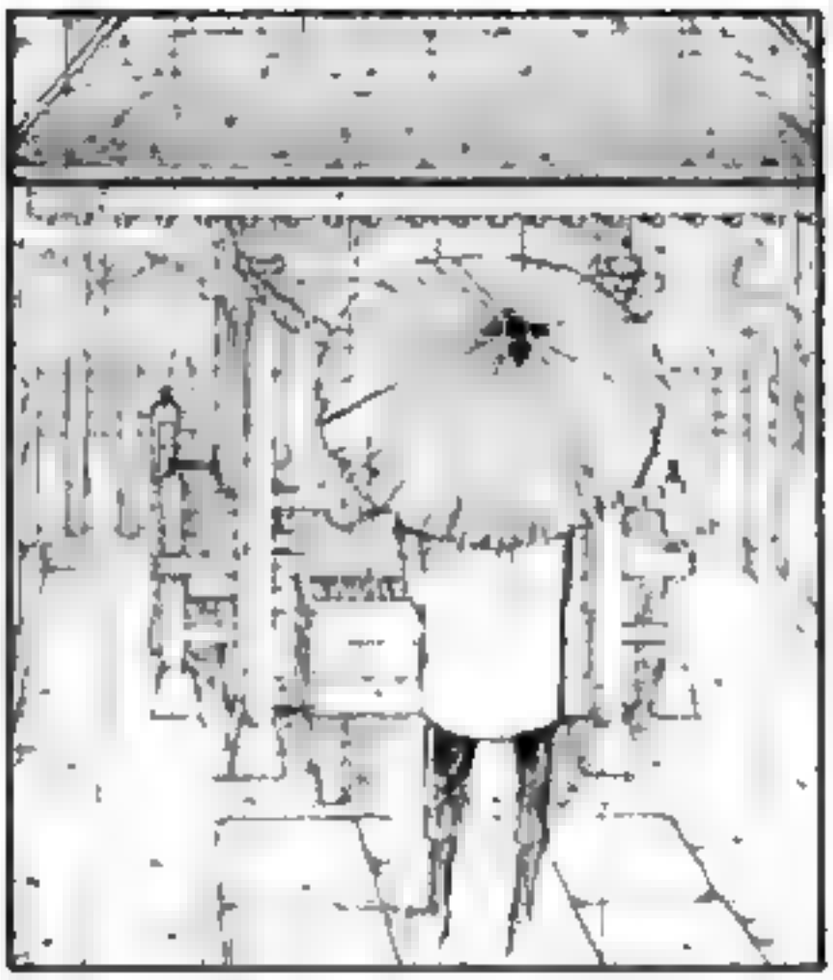




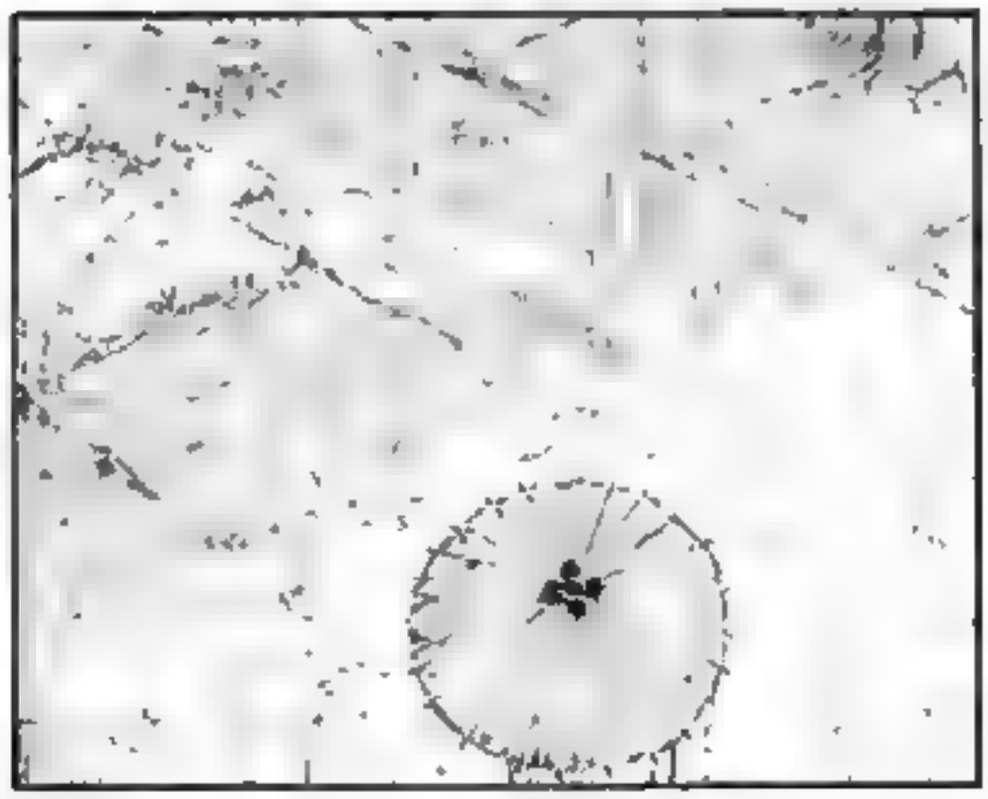


NOTE Isama is noticing that this is a *very* strange Buddhist temple. Torii gates and Inari statues are common features of Shinto shrines, but they're unusual in Buddhist temples. You sometimes see small shrines inside of temples, or temples built right next to shrines, but they're still separate structures - at one point, the separation of temples and shrines was required by law.

Inari statues?



I'm pretty far from the hotel..
I didn't think the temple was this big.



I wonder what that is over there?

drizzle

I should go back...

Grass?

It looks like waves...

I guess there's not really much here.

That must be the priests' quarters...

I wonder if anybody lives there?

This place really does have a weird atmosphere.

Hm...

This whole place is spooky.

Maybe because it's dark and rainy?

That's unusual for a Buddhist temple, isn't it?

It doesn't have a graveyard or a bell tower.

Maybe I'll take a look at the altar.

Hm..

.....

sigh

I'm more afraid of catching a cold..

It's not like I'm afraid of ghosts!

Buddha won't mind if I take shelter from the rain, right?

STEP

STEP

STEP

STEP

Sorry, Buddha...

CREAK

Whoa, what a creepy statue.

I guess I should say a prayer.

AHHH
!?

gasp
gasp
H...

He's
ALIVE
!?

WHO
ARE
YOU?

THERE'S NO NEED TO BE AFRAID.

I DON'T MIND IF YOU LOOK AROUND.

OH, UM, I'M REALLY SORRY...

I WAS JUST EXPLORING THE TEMPLE...

Y-YOU MUST BE THE PRIEST...

WHY DID YOU COME HERE?

HUH?

YOU CAN-NOT.

W-WELL THEN, I'LL JUST SAY A PRAYER TO THE BUDDHA, AND THEN I'LL LEAVE...

OKAY?

But if he doesn't mind, I guess it's okay...

Eep!

I don't want to get cursed..

THERE IS NO BUDDHA HERE.

TURN

flail

flail

RUN

HM...

WELL THEN...

OH...

GULP

OH REALLY ...

There are no worshippers, no funerals, no bell tower, and no graves!

There's not even a statue of the Buddha!!

What kind of Buddhist temple is this!?

There's nothing to worship...

How can it be a temple without a Buddha!?

MISTER! YOU'RE SO PALE! WHAT'S WRONG!?

HUFF

SLAM

HUFF

Eh?

BUT IT'S ALREADY EIGHT O'CLOCK ...

YOU SHOULD TAKE A BATH RIGHT AWAY!

GASP

GASP

OH ...

LET ME WIPE YOUR FEET!

YOU'RE ALL MUDDY!

AND YOU'RE SOAKING WET, EVEN THOUGH YOU HAD AN UMBRELLA!

HERE, TAKE THESE!

THEN YOU SHOULD EAT SOMETHING!

NO ...

DID YOU GET DINNER?

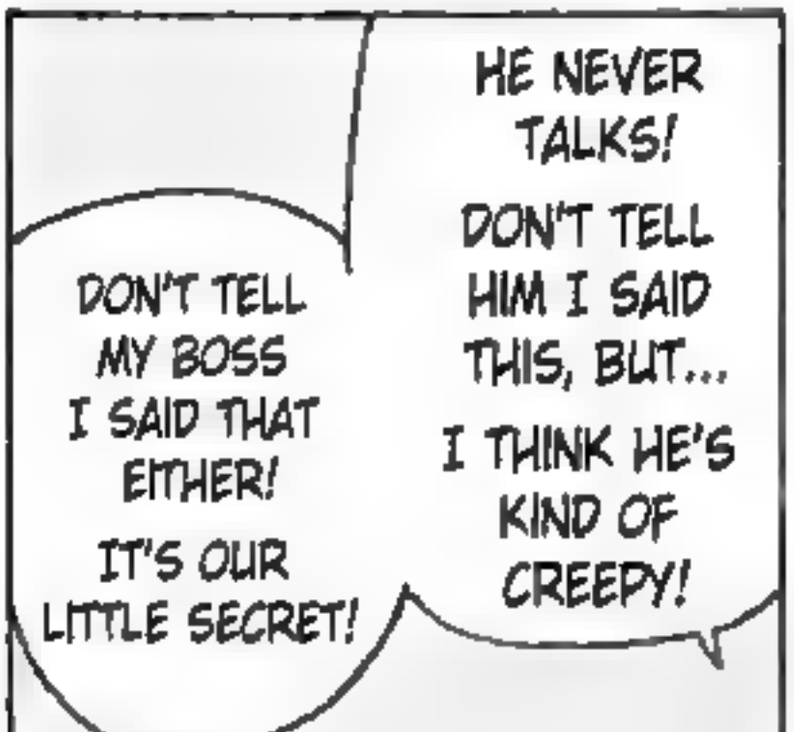
UM ...

WHERE DID YOU GO THAT YOU GOT SO DIRTY?

WE ONLY HAVE TWO GUESTS TONIGHT, SO IT'S NOT LIKE THERE'S A LINE FOR THE BATH!

NOTE During WWII, 500-750 thousand Japanese soldiers were captured by the Soviet Union and forced to work in POW labor camps. It wasn't until 1952 that the last Japanese POWs were returned to Japan. When these men came home, they often had no civilian clothes. Clothing was rationed and in short supply, so many decommissioned soldiers kept wearing their uniforms.

WE DON'T SERVE MEALS HERE, BUT ANYTHING YOU LEAVE BEHIND IN THE KITCHEN IS FAIR GAME FOR THE OTHER GUESTS!
YOU JUST HAVE TO COOK IT.


HE NEVER TALKS!
DON'T TELL HIM I SAID THIS, BUT...
I THINK HE'S KIND OF CREEPY!
DON'T TELL MY BOSS I SAID THAT EITHER!
IT'S OUR LITTLE SECRET!
OKAY ...

HE ACTUALLY LEFT AGAIN EARLIER TODAY.

WHO KNOWS WHEN HE'LL BE BACK.

EH?

WELL, HE USUALLY SPENDS MOST OF HIS TIME IN HIS ROOM...

BUT SOMETIMES HE'LL LEAVE FOR TWO OR THREE DAYS AT A TIME.

THAT FORMER SOLDIER...

DOES HE HAVE HAVE BUSINESS AROUND HERE?

BUT HE WEARS HIS UNIFORM WHENEVER HE GOES OUT, SO I MAKE SURE IT GETS WASHED.

NO... BUT WHEN HE FIRST CAME HERE, HE WORE THE SAME CLOTHES FOR TEN DAYS STRAIGHT!

HE FINALLY WENT AND BOUGHT SOME SECONDHAND CLOTHES.

DOES HE ALWAYS DRESS LIKE THAT?

He probably doesn't have a job if he's still in uniform.

YEAH.

.....

I wasn't scolded!

OOOH! YOU JUST COULDN'T RESIST YOUR CURIOSITY, RIGHT?

...TO THE TEMPLE.

THE PRIEST MUST HAVE SCOLDED YOU FOR SNOOPING AROUND, AND THAT'S WHY YOU RAN BACK IN SUCH A PANIC!

Hm... that's odd, isn't it?

Hm...

ANYWAY, WHERE DID YOU GO EARLIER?

I SAW PEOPLE CARRYING A COFFIN TOWARDS THE TEMPLE.

ACTUALLY, THERE *WAS* A FUNERAL THERE RECENTLY... I THINK IT WAS LAST SUMMER.

HAHA! YOU KNOW THEY SAY THAT CURIOSITY KILLED THE CAT, RIGHT?

WE'VE HAD OTHER GUESTS VISIT THAT TEMPLE, THOUGH.

OH?

Maybe there's no Buddha statue because they couldn't afford one?

You'd think that a temple that doesn't have any regular worshippers would be too poor to stay in business.

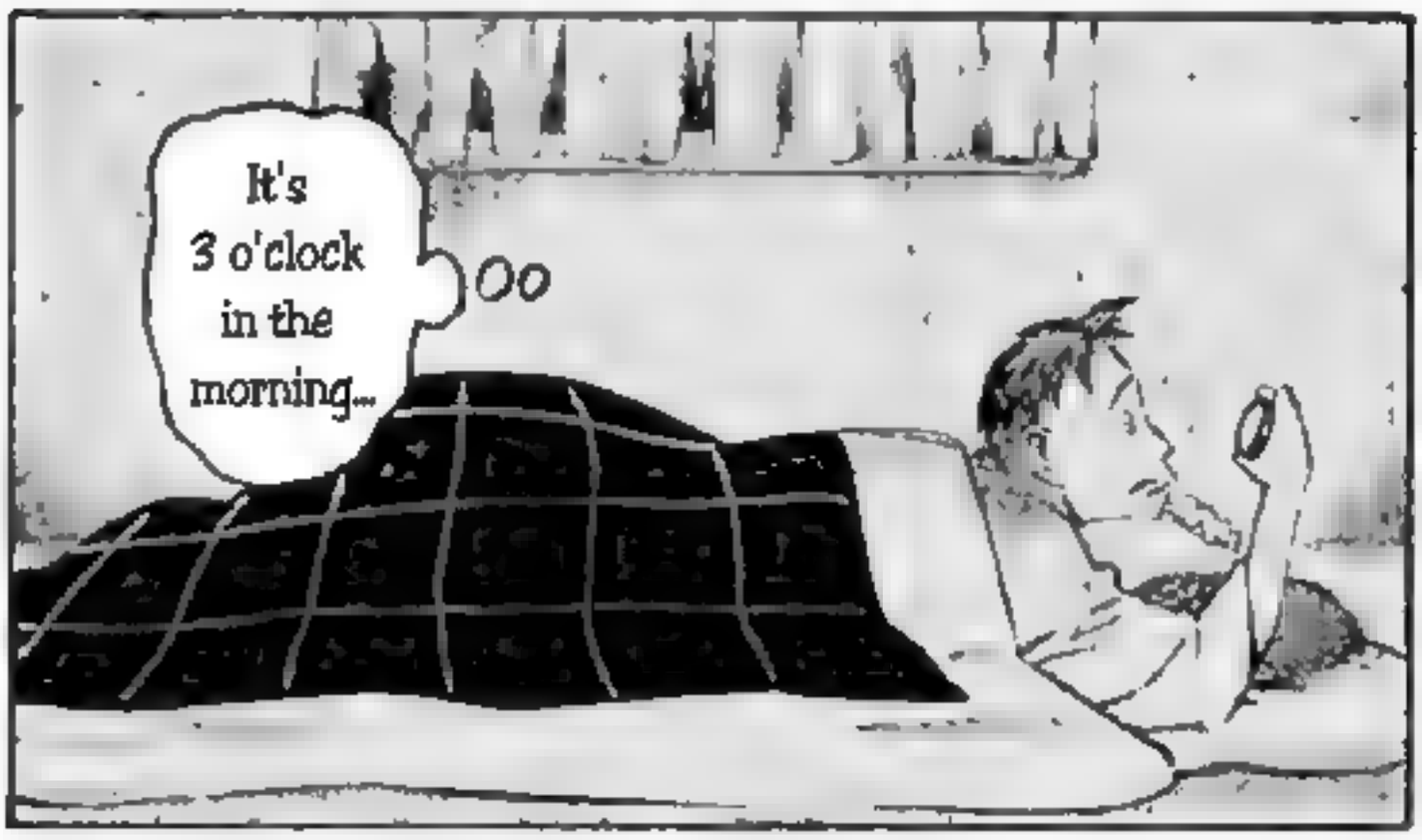
Weird ...

SNORE

Every-thing about that temple was weird...

Still, it's weird...

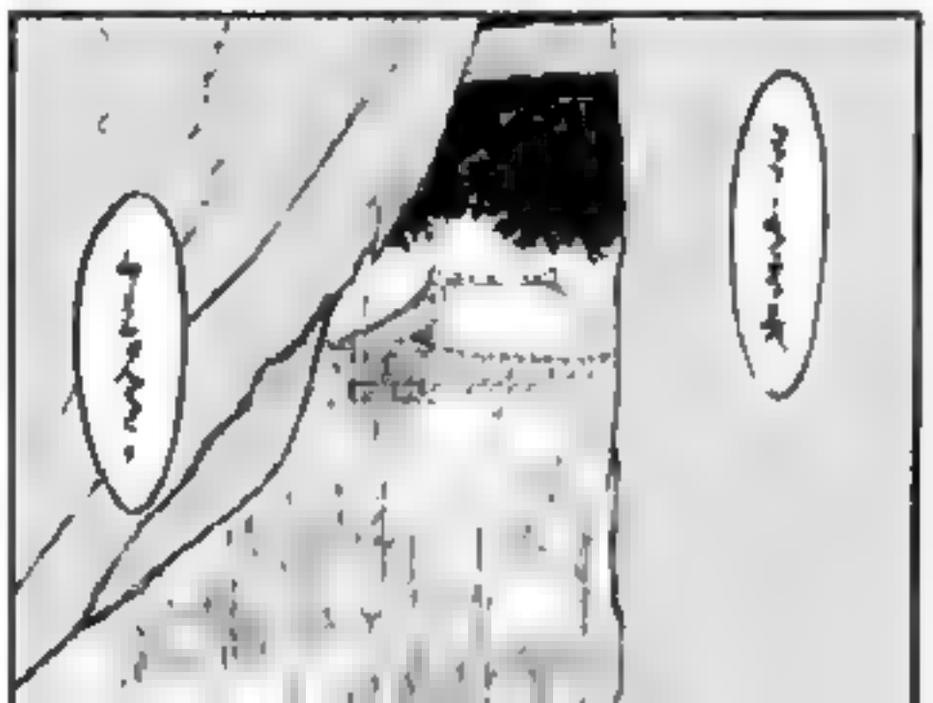
ぼそぼそ
ぼそぼそ


It's 3 o'clock in the morning...

UGH ...

Buddhist chanting?
But the temple doesn't even have an altar...
Why would someone be chanting?

What's that sound?
ぼそぼそ
ぼそぼそ


ぼそぼそ
ぼそぼそ

Maybe I'll do some fishing after all.

I should just go home...

It's none of my business!

I guess I won't say goodbye to Kine-san.

It's 4 AM...

Huh?

But it would be weird if I went there...

Akemi-san's house is around here, right?

That's the man from the hotel...

No, it's none of my business!

Is he waiting for someone?

.....?

I'm not catching anything...

.....

CRASH

What a strange woman...

Maybe I should try fishing in Hayama...

That's the path to Akemi-san's house...

VROOOOM

VROOOOM

Huh !?

SCREECH

Police cars?

Maybe they found another skull?

DAMN IT, I'M TIRED...

AND I STILL HAVE TO WRITE A REPORT...

COME ON, HURRY UP!

It looks like they're headed towards Akemi-san's house...

No, wait, the path splits into two, right?

Where are they going?

COME ON!

EH? SERI-OUSLY?

THIS WAY!

IS THAT THE POLICE?

MUMBLE

MUMBLE

WHAT'S GOING ON?

MUMBLE

POINT

LOOK! SOMEONE'S COMING OUT!

Ah...

WHO IS IT!?

GASP

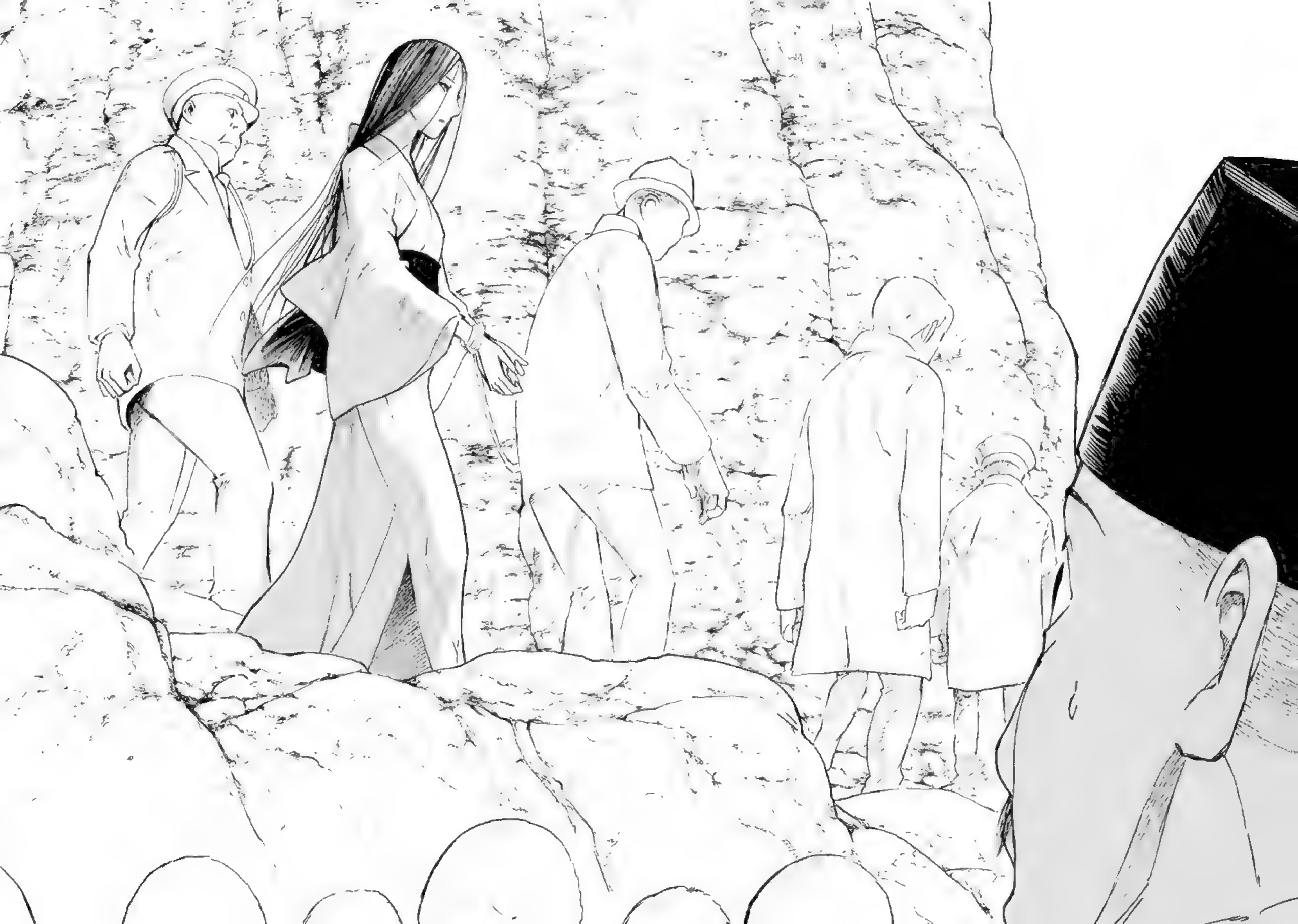
MA'AM, USE THIS TO COVER YOUR FACE!

YOU DON'T WANT TO BE IN TOMORROW'S NEWSPAPERS, DO YOU?

AKEMI ...

A...

!



AKEMI
...

A...

SAN
...

OI, WHAT'S GOING ON!

SHOVE

OOH!!

IS SHE A CRIMINAL!?

WHISPER

WHISPER

GO HOME!

THIS ISN'T ENTER-TAINMENT!

WHISTLE

VROOM

VROOOOOM

Did someone betray her?

But how...?

Did they find out that she killed that Tamie girl 8 years ago?

Why are they arresting Akemi-san?

TAMIE IS STILL ALIVE...

SHE'S STILL ALIVE...

Maybe Tamie survived the murder attempt and finally found Akemi-san...

Why does he look so shocked?

It's that former soldier...

.....

NO! YOU'LL INTERFERE WITH THE INVESTI-GATION!

PLEASE, LET ME UP THERE!

GASP

WHAT'S THAT!?

IF YOU DON'T LEAVE, I'LL PUT YOU UNDER ARREST!

I SAID NO!

A corpse ...?

GASP

A CORPSE !?

WHAT'S GOING ON?

UM, THE WOMAN WHO LIVES THERE IS AN ACQUAINTANCE OF MINE...

UM...

THAT WOMAN ...

THAT WOMAN KILLED HER HUSBAND.

LIDAGAWA AKEMI MURDERED HER HUSBAND, LIDAGAWA TAKASHI.

IT HAPPENED THE NIGHT BEFORE LAST.

AKEMI-SAN DID *WHAT!?*

YEAH ...